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THESEUS AND THE METROPOLITAN AMAZON

BY GEORGE W. ELDERKIN
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The attribution of the statues of Amazons in the museums of Berlin and Rome to masters of the fifth century has been attempted on the basis of style with divergent results. Although two of the sculptors, Phidias and Cresilas were active in Athens and consequently conversant with Attic story no one apparently has raised the question as to where these artists sought inspiration for their statues of the Amazons. In carving the Olympian Zeus, Phidias had in mind the Homeric description of the god. Was his statue of an Amazon pure invention or did it represent some Amazon who figured in Athenian tradition? One might regard his theme as fanciful were it not for the great popularity of the Amazons at Athens in the very days when Phidias lived and worked there. Athenian artists were particularly interested in the Amazon. Not only the sculptor but the mural painter and the vase-painter reflected the public interest in the warrior women. Micon painted the

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battle between the Amazons and the Athenians under Theseus. The martial women were also depicted in the sanctuary of Theseus.¹ Phidias represented them in the western metopes of the Parthenon and again on the shield of the Athena Parthenos. In the minor art of vase-painting which chose themes popular at Athens, the Amazons and Theseus again appear, he and Antiope being named in inscriptions.² The popularity of the Amazons in Periclean Athens was beyond question closely linked with the great popularity of Theseus whose bones had been brought to Athens from Scyrus by Cimon in 469 at the command of the Delphic oracle. The greatly increased vogue of the hero was due to the popular belief that he had played an important part in the defeat of the Persians at Marathon where many had seen Theseus in armor advancing against the invaders.³ No wonder that the Athenians dedicated a sanctuary to him after the battle,⁴ and represented him in the presence of Athena on a metope of the Athenian treasury at Delphi. In Micon's painting Theseus was seen rising from the earth.⁵ Clearly the hero was in the minds of the Athenians a very significant factor in the struggle with the Persians. He rose against the Persians as long before he had risen against the Amazons who were likewise invaders from the East.

Since Micon painted Theseus and the Athenians in battle with the Amazons it is quite possible that Phidias was equally definite and represented in the western metopes of the Parthenon not a vague contest between Greeks and Amazons but the battle which Theseus waged with the warrior women in the streets of Athens. On the shield of the Athena Parthenos, Phidias by poetic license had represented Pericles as participating in the battle with the Amazons thereby suggesting Athens as the scene of the struggle. The same close connection of sculptural theme with Athenian tradition may be assumed for the Centauromachy of the southern metopes since in a painting of that struggle in the sanctuary of Theseus he was depicted as having slain a centaur. The sculptor could have been as patriotic as the painter. The gables and frieze of the temple drew their subjects from Athenian traditions. If the southern and western metopes were tributes to Theseus then he would be closely associated with Athena in sculpture as he was in local tradition at Athens. The vase-painter Euphronius represented them together in the depths of the sea.

¹Paus., I, 17, 2.

²Furtwaengler-Reichhold, *Griech. Vasenm.*, pl. 28, text.

³Plutarch, *Theseus*.

⁴Paus., I, 17, 6.

⁵Paus., I, 15, 3.

A second reason for the appearance of Theseus and the Amazons in art was the innate desire of the Athenian artist to commemorate present achievement in terms of the glorious past of his city. The victory of Theseus over the Amazons, which was less mythical than that of the gods over the giants, enjoyed the distinction of being the first deed of valor performed by Athenians against an alien race.⁶ The close association of Theseus with the Amazons is attested by other evidences than those of art. The place where peace was concluded between them was called the Horcomosium which was beside the Theseum. The ancient sacrifice to the Amazons was offered the day before the feast of Theseus. The Amazoneum on the hill of Ares and the tomb of the Amazon Antiope showed a continued respect for the warrior maids.

The Amazons before their departure from Asia Minor for the invasion of Greece had founded the sanctuary of Artemis at Ephesus and had dedicated there a statue of the goddess who was their companion in hunting.⁷ Hence the temple of the Ephesian Artemis was an important topographical detail in the Athenian traditions about the Amazons. Theseus also had close ties with Artemis. At his native city of Troezen he founded a temple with images of saviour Artemis because of his safe return from the Cretan labyrinth. His son Hippolytus erected a temple to the Wolfish Artemis.⁸ Had the Athenians and Troezenians wished to honor the Amazon queen of Theseus, Antiope, with dedications in a temple, the Artemisium at Ephesus could have been very appropriately chosen. It is therefore conjectured that the four statues of Amazons which were set up there were mainland dedications and not Ephesian as has been generally supposed.

If the Ephesian statues are an expression of the great popularity of Theseus then Athenian tradition about the Amazons may yield a closer definition of the statues. Plutarch in his life of Theseus gives a detailed account of the invasion of Athens by the Amazons. They drove the Athenians as far as the temple of the Furies whence they in turn were forced back to their tents. The Amazons were finally defeated but Antiope was mortally wounded as she fought beside her lord Theseus against her own kindred. The tombs of Antiope and Molpadia who slew her were still shown to travellers in the days of Pausanias. Plutarch knew of a stele in honor of Antiope which stood near the temple of Olympian Earth. These monuments and traditions must have been

⁶Paus., V, 10, 2.

⁷Pindar in Paus., VII, 2, 7. Diodorus Siculus, IV, 16.

⁸Paus., II, 31, 1 and 4.

known to Phidias. What more likely than that he should represent the most distinguished Amazon of Athenian story? The Athenian vase-painter had depicted Antiope. Why should not his fellow artist the sculptor represent her? The most appealing moment in the story of Antiope was when she was mortally wounded while fighting at the side of her king Theseus, the great popular hero of Athens. Phidias could not have had a more appropriate theme for a statue of an Amazon than this. Three of the four Ephesian statues of Amazons have survived in copies. Two of these represent Amazons who have been wounded in the side but the two differ greatly. The statue of which the Berlin and Metropolitan Museums have replicas was distinguished for the noble absence of concern for the wound whereas the statue of which there is a copy in the Capitoline Museum was closely occupied with the wound. The splendid simplicity of the Metropolitan Amazon (Fig. 1) and of the Berlin Amazon, and the fine restraint of both mark them as replicas of the Phidian original. Phidias in his statue told the story of Antiope in the simplest terms possible. He represented her as wounded in the side. She had left her armor on the field of battle and withdrawn to rest her failing body upon a pillar. Her right arm was raised, a conventional sign in Greek art of relaxation and weariness. The elimination of all armor threw into higher relief the moment portrayed which was dramatic and pathetic. The impending death of the queen is suggested, not indicated. The sculptor of the fourth century could represent the collapse of a mortally wounded warrior like the Persian of the Alexander sarcophagus who slumps from his horse; Phidias effectively suggested such collapse. He illustrates the finer restraint of the fifth century.

The pillar without which the Amazon could not stand was not merely a support but was also finely suggestive of environment. As the tree-trunk, upon which the Hermes of Praxiteles leans, shows that he is in the woods; as the ship's prow which supports the Nike of Samothrace indicates a victory on the sea, and as the dolphin beside Aphrodite in statuary suggests the sea from which she was born, so the pillar upon which the wounded Antiope rests her weary body is not just a sculptor's prop but alludes to the building near which she sustained her wound. She withdrew from the fray and leaned against a shaft of the temple of the Furies. Plutarch was free to tell the story of Antiope in a paragraph but Phidias was restricted by the canons of his art to a few plastic words. Of these the pillar is one.

But the Amazons in the Metropolitan and Berlin Museums are gener-

ally considered copies of the Polyclitan original. The attribution to Phidias which is here proposed will be questioned by those who accept the conventional interpretation of Lucian's description of the Phidian Amazon:

τὴν Ἀμάζονα τὴν ἐπερειδομένην τῷ δορατίῳ.

Lucian seems to describe an Amazon that leans upon a spear. This interpretation is erroneous. δοράτιον is a diminutive of δόρυ the primary meaning of which is "beam". Hence the diminutive may mean "little beam" as well as "spear". Lucian uses the word in the first of these two meanings. The Phidian Amazon, he says, rested on a small shaft. This shaft introduces architecture into statuary unobtrusively. Phidias may have borrowed the synecdoche from painting especially since he had been a painter in his youth. At this time in painting, a tree could represent a forest, and a column a temple.⁹ Phidias placed a small column beneath the Nike that the statue of the Parthenos held, as is shown by the Varvakeion statuette. This column has seemed so objectionable to some critics that they regard it as an addition of the copyist. But it is impossible that the chryselephantine original carried an image six feet high on the outstretched and unsupported arm of the goddess. The support was probably a fluted column since flutes would have harmonized with the vertically channeled folds of drapery on the goddess. But the column was not merely a support. The Phidian idea was that Victory has descended to the temple of the protecting goddess of Athens. This Victory upon a column is the equivalent in idea of the Victory which served as the central acroterium of the temple of Zeus at Olympia. The hand of Athena between the column and the statuette gave unity to the group. Nike descended to the Parthenon and was received by the Parthenos.

Comparison of the Metropolitan Amazon with the Capitoline shows the latter to be a less noble version of the same theme, if the copyist has reproduced his original without essential modification. The left hand which holds the garment is a restoration but it reached toward the wound, making the Amazon more conscious of pain than is the Metropolitan figure. The drapery of the Capitoline Amazon is less reminiscent of that of the Fates of the Parthenon than is the drapery of the

⁹Gardner, *Principles of Greek Art*, p. 258.

Such synecdoche appeared centuries before Phidias in Minoan art. The three doves perched upon pillars convey in abbreviated form the same idea as the Mycenaean gold plaque of a tripartite shrine surmounted by doves. There is one column and one dove for each of the three cellae of the plaque. The relief above the gate of the Mycenaean citadel may represent the temple of the Asiatic mother goddess with a column guarded by the lions which flank her image later in classical art.

Metropolitan and Berlin statues. The sculptor was less skilled in the carving of folds. This sculptor was probably Polyclitus who as a specialist in nude male statuary did not give much attention to drapery. The Mattei Amazon whose chiton is arranged like that of the Metropolitan is probably from the original by Cresilas who departed from the extreme simplicity of Phidias by introducing armor to define the figure as an Amazon. She may perhaps be identified as Molpadia, the slayer of Antiope. Cresilas appears to have been interested in armor, for he placed a helmet on the head of his herm-portrait of Pericles.

The dedication of the four Amazons, works of four masters of the Greek mainland, is satisfactorily explained as a commemoration of Theseus and his Amazon queen Antiope. Through ties with her the cities of Theseus, Athens and Troezene, were closely linked with the Ephesian temple of Artemis where the statues were set up appropriately since the Amazons had established the temple on the eve of their departure for the invasion of Greece. Phidias and Cresilas, it may be assumed, made the statues which Athens sent to Ephesus, and Polyclitus and Phradmon those dedicated by Troezene. The statues were expressive of the pride which the two cities took in their Amazonian traditions. That a part of the Athenian populace had sympathized with the Amazons is evident from the tradition that the Erechtheids had left Athens for Smyrna because of the war against the Amazons. According to Callimachus,¹⁰ Hippo who was queen of the Amazons had dedicated the statue of Artemis in her temple at Ephesus; another story made Hippe a wife of Theseus.¹¹ Hippo and Hippe are probably one and the same name, and this but a title alluding to her as an expert equestrian.

¹⁰Hymn. in Dian., 239, 266.

¹¹Athenaeus, XIII, 557a. On Hipa as the name of a Hittite equestrian goddess, see le Lasseur, *Les Déeses Armées*, pp. 236, 247.



FIG. 1. MORETTO DA BRESCIA: JESUS AMONG THE ANIMALS

Metropolitan Museum, New York

JESUS AMONG THE ANIMALS BY
MORETTO DA BRESCIA.

BY ROBERT EISLER
Unterach am Attersee, Austria

A few years before the war Dr. Jean Paul Richter acquired a small painting at the public sale of the Cereda collection in Milan. It was sold later on to the New York Metropolitan Museum.¹ The charming little picture which breathes an unmistakably Franciscan loving-kindness towards our brethren of the animal world, is attributed to Moretto da Brescia (Alessandro Bonvicino, about 1498-1554). For all I know, it may very well be an early work of this master. In no case should the naïvely awkward drawing of the various animals be used as an argument against this attribution, since it is evident that this difficult subject has not been chosen by an experienced painter of animals in order to show off his proficiency in this speciality, but that it has been imposed upon an artist unaccustomed to such a task by the desire or by the commission to visualize a particular passage in the New Testament which has, to my knowledge, never been illustrated before or afterwards by any modern artist.

There is in the Gospel of Marc (1,13), immediately after the account of Jesus' baptism by St. John a curious tradition, not to be found in any other Gospel, to wit that "Jesus was in the wilderness forty days and forty nights and was with the wild beasts".² There is no doubt that these are the words which Moretto da Brescia, or whoever painted that charming idyll, wanted to illustrate. The verse in question says, moreover, that Jesus was 'tempted by Satan' and that 'the angels ministered unto Him',³ but evidently our Bible reading artist or his Franciscan Maecenas in the remote alpine valley of Northern Italy was not interested either in the devil or in the angels, but exclusively in the mysterious tradition about Jesus hiding in the desert and living in peaceful meditation among the wild animals inhabiting it. Now, while the temptations of Jesus are not infrequently illustrated in medieval illuminated MSS., I know of

¹I owe this information as well as the photograph reproduced as Fig. 1, to the never failing kindness of Dr. Jean Paul Richter (Lugano). I saw the original on the occasion of my recent visits to the U. S. A. in November 1933 and 1934.

²Vulgate text: "Et erat in deserto quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus et tentabatur a satana, eratque cum bestiis, et angeli ministrabant ei".

³This is equally found in Matth. IV, 11.

only one single instance where Jesus is represented between the wild beasts and the angels: I mean a manuscript of certain hitherto unedited homilies of Beda Venerabilis about the Gospels in St. Gerona⁴ in Spain (Fig. 2), where the illuminator's attention has evidently been drawn to the passage by what Bede has to say about it. Otherwise 'the Christ among the wild beasts in the desert' is never to be found in traditional Christian iconography — unless it should be argued that it is this particular scene which was, allegorically, meant by the early Christian catacomb painters, when they represented 'Orpheus among the beasts of the wilderness' (Fig. 3).⁵

The reader will see himself that the various animals in the New York picture are obviously bowing to Jesus and adoring Him.⁶ The queer little dragon, asp or basilisk in the center of the painting, the snake wriggling before the stone on which Jesus rests His left foot and the lion crouching at his side on the right side of the picture will immediately remind him of Psalm XCI, 13 'thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder,⁷ the young lion and the dragon'.

Even as, according to Gen. I 28 the first Adam⁸ before the fall in paradise ruled over all the animals 'over the fowl in the air and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'⁹, even so the Christ as 'the second' or 'future Adam'¹⁰ — having been purified by the baptism of St. John and having victoriously resisted the temptations of Satan — rules again over all the creatures. Thus in the 18th and 19th chapter of Pseudo-Matthew's Gospel of Infancy¹¹, dragons, lions, leopards and wolves come meekly to adore the infant Jesus and in ch. 35¹² Jesus plays

⁴Fol. 22 reprod. by Wilh. Neuss, *Die katalanische Bibelillustration um die Wende des ersten Jahrtausends u. die altspanischen Buchmaler*, Kurt Schroeder, Bonn-Leipzig, 1922 (*Veröffentlichungen d. romanischen Auslandsinstitutes d. Univ. Bonn*), Bd. III, pl. 54, Fig. 160, cp. p. 115.

⁵Cp. Eisler, *Orphisch-dionysische Mysterien*, Leipzig, 1925, p. 50, Fig. 24. The frontispiece of the famous Paris Psalter Graec. Nr. 139 (ibid., pl. I, Fig. 5) shows that an Orpheus picture may be meant to represent king David playing the lyre amidst the sheep and goat of his father's herds. Curiously enough the medieval author of the *De Deorum Imaginibus Libellus* (ed. Liebeschütz, *Fulgentius Metaphorialis*, p. 123, pl. XXIV, our Fig. 4) knew nothing about Christ having ever been likened to Orpheus.

⁶In a similar way all the animals of the jungle prostrate themselves before the Buddha (*Lalitā Vistara*, trsl. by Foucaux, I 236 and *Abhinish gramana Sutra*, Beal, *The Romantic Legend of Sākya Buddha*, 1875, pp. 147, 153, 171, 222, 224).

⁷*basiliskos* in the Greek and Latin text.

⁸I Cor. XV, 45.

⁹Early byzantine ivory of the Friedrichsmuseum in Berlin, first published by Strzygowski in O. Kern, *Orpheus*, pl. I, Berlin, 1920. (Eisler, *Orph.-dion. Myst.* pl. IV, Fig. 18.)

¹⁰I Cor. XV, 45 and Rom. V, 14.

¹¹Thilo, *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti* p. 394. Eng. trsl. by Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1924, p. 73. See also ch. XIV, Thilo pp. 382-384; M. R. James, 1. c. p. 74; and cp. M. R. James, *Latin Infancy Gospels, A New Text etc.*, Cambridge 1927 ch. 86 pp. 80 f. and p. 106: 'Mary set her Son to rest . . . in the stall of the ass and the young ox . . . and the irrational creatures then recognized their creator, for they were licking Him and adoring Him, both the ass and the young ox'.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 78.

in the lion's cave with the lion's whelps, as it is foretold by the Prophet Isaiah¹³ that "the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hand in the cockatrice's den, the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb" and so forth. Thus the stag and the bear, the sheep and the fox, the eagle and the dove and all kinds of fowl are peacefully gathered around Jesus who kindly, silently and compassionately looks down upon the dumb creatures

"that beasts and birds may learn to know their God".¹⁴

The artist who painted or the Maecenas who commissioned our picture did certainly not believe with Descartes and certain theologians that animals are soulless machines, but with Plato's successor Xenocrates, Clemens of Alexandria¹⁵ and St. Francis that even the dumb creature is not entirely excluded from the *gnosis* of the Divinity.

As to the meaning and the ultimate source of the motive itself in the Gospel of Marc there is a long series of stories about various saints — Christian hermits as well as Moslem *welis*¹⁶ and Brahman or Buddhist ascets — living in the solitude of the forest, desert or jungle amidst and in friendly intimacy with the wild beasts.¹⁷ There may be a certain amount of truth in them for General Howard Bury seems to have found in the Rongchar valley of the high Himalaya hermits living in rock-caves surrounded by all kinds of wild animals who were fed regularly by those ascets¹⁸. On the whole they are certainly meant to illustrate the eschatological doctrine that the pure and sinless ones in the Kindom of God will again dominate the animal world in peace and freedom as man had done in paradise before the fall.¹⁹

The earliest of these Messianic legends concerns St. John the Baptist, of whom the Slavonic version of Flavius Josephus says that he lived 'in the bush like the beasts'²⁰. It is highly probable that Josephus has derived this feature as the rest of his narrative concerning the Baptist from a lost Nasorean 'Life and Passion of John' which has been utilized

¹³XI, 6-9. Cp. Sibylline Oracles III, 787 ff.; Apocalypse of Baruch LXXIII, 6 etc.

¹⁴'ut pecudes volucresque Deum cognoscere possint'. Pope Damasus' and St. Jerome's Panegyric of Christ, ed. de Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* 4, 5 p. 29 (1887).

¹⁵Strom. V, 13.

¹⁶About a *weli* who had lived for twenty years among the gazelles, see Curtiss, *Ursemitische Religion im Volksleben des heutigen Orients*, p. 64.

¹⁷See Charles Allyn Williams, *Oriental Affinities of the Legend of the Hairy Anchorite*, University of Illinois, *Studies in Language and Literature*, vols. X, May 1925 Nr. XI, Nov. 1926, Nr. 4.

¹⁸a Eisler. *Orph. ali Myst.* p. 350, Note 2.

¹⁹See Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs *Naphtali Dionys.* ch. XII; *Issachar* ch. VII and cp. with *Apocalypse of Moses* ch. X f. (Spitta, *Zeitschrift f. neutestam. Wissenschaft*, V, 1904, p. 324.)

²⁰See my book "The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist, according to the unpublished 'Capture of Jerusalem' of Flavius Josephus", London, Methuen, and New York (The Dial Press) 1930, p. 225 (pp. XXI) and pp. 227ff.

by the authors of the synoptic Gospels as well as by the apocryphal 'book of Zacharias'²¹. That they went into the wilderness 'to live there like the animals on leaves and roots' is twice said of the heroes of the national revolt against the Seleucide kings in the books of the Maccabees.²²

In any case there is good evidence for the supposition that the legends about the martyrdom of the Baptist's father Zacharias, about the flight of St. Elisabeth and young John into the wilderness which exists in old Slavonic versions²¹ are dependent on this document which originated among the disciples of the Baptist. This accounts for the interesting fact that there are Russian icons (Fig. 4),²³ showing — in the background — St. John the Baptist in the desert among the gazelles drinking, like them, the clear water out of the streamlet — and the angels approaching on the clouds of heaven to minister unto Him, exactly as Marc I, 13 says of Jesus that He was in the desert among the beasts and the angels were serving Him. In the lower left corner we see the angel leading the infant John into the desert, according to a legend of which we have several Greek, Latin and Russian versions.²⁴ The main figure in the foreground is St. John pointing to the infant Jesus, reclining in the chalice full of wine used at the Eucharistic sacrifice, and uttering the words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

It seems evident to me that all three figures of this icon are meant to be the Baptist. Still I would not care to contradict a critic who would prefer to say that the nimbed figure drawing water in the background between the gazelles, is Jesus staying for forty days in the desert 'among wild beasts', having just left the Baptist after his baptism. If this is the true explanation, this detail of a Russian seventeenth century icon would be another interesting parallel to Moretto da Brescia's

"Christ among the Beasts of the wilderness."

²¹aBerendts, Studien über die Zacharias apokryphen, Dorpat 1895, pp. 68-75.

²²II Macc. V, 27; X, 7.

²³Ikön of Nazari Savin, painted in 1602, Ostrukhov Museum in Moscow pl. XXI of my book "The Messiah Jesus"; Pl. XXXIII of my book *Jesus Basileus* after P. P. Muratov, *Les Icones Russes*, Paris, 1927. (Courtesy of the publisher M. J. Schiffrin).

²⁴Vol. I, p. 433 note 6 of my book, *Jesus Basileus* (Heidelberg 1929).



FIG. 2. ILLUSTRATION FROM GERONA MS.

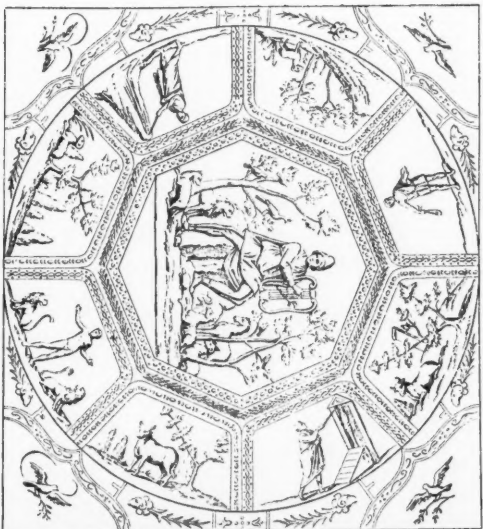


FIG. 3. ORPHEUS FRESCO
Catacombs

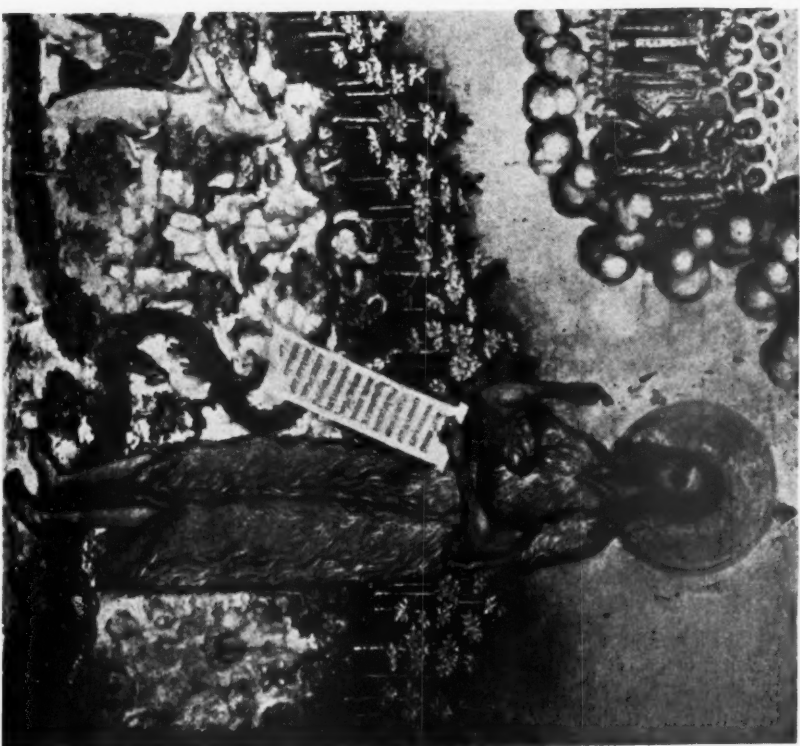


FIG. 4. RUSSIAN ICON BY NAZARIY SAVIN
Ostrikho Museum, Moscow

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FIG. 2. ILLUSTRATION FROM GERONA MS.

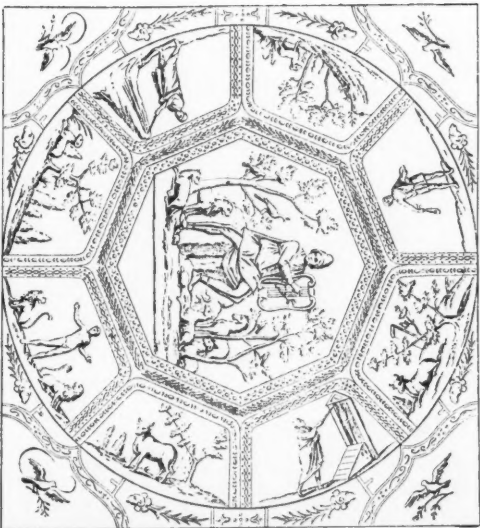


FIG. 3. ORPHEUS FRESCO
Catacombs

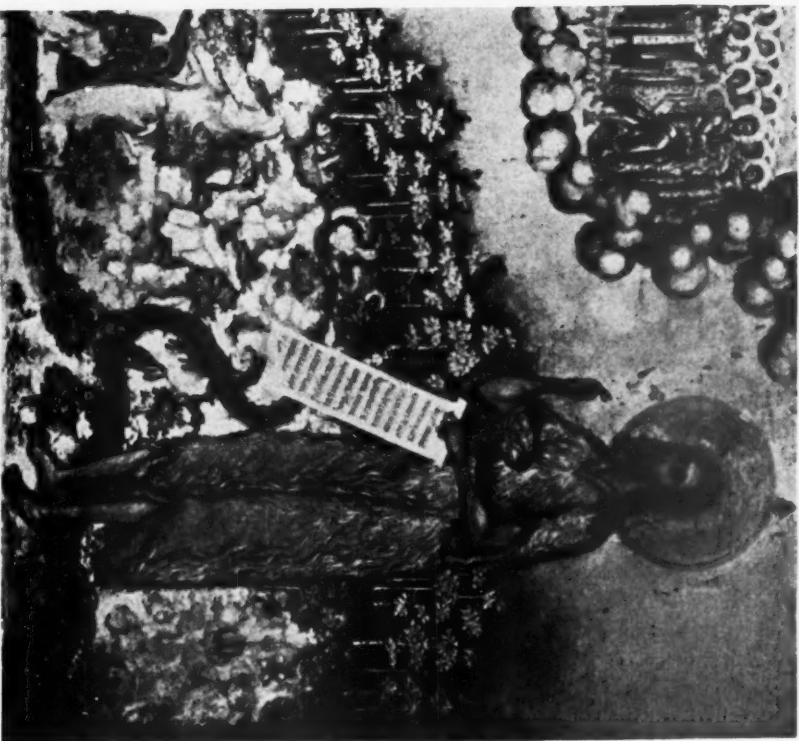
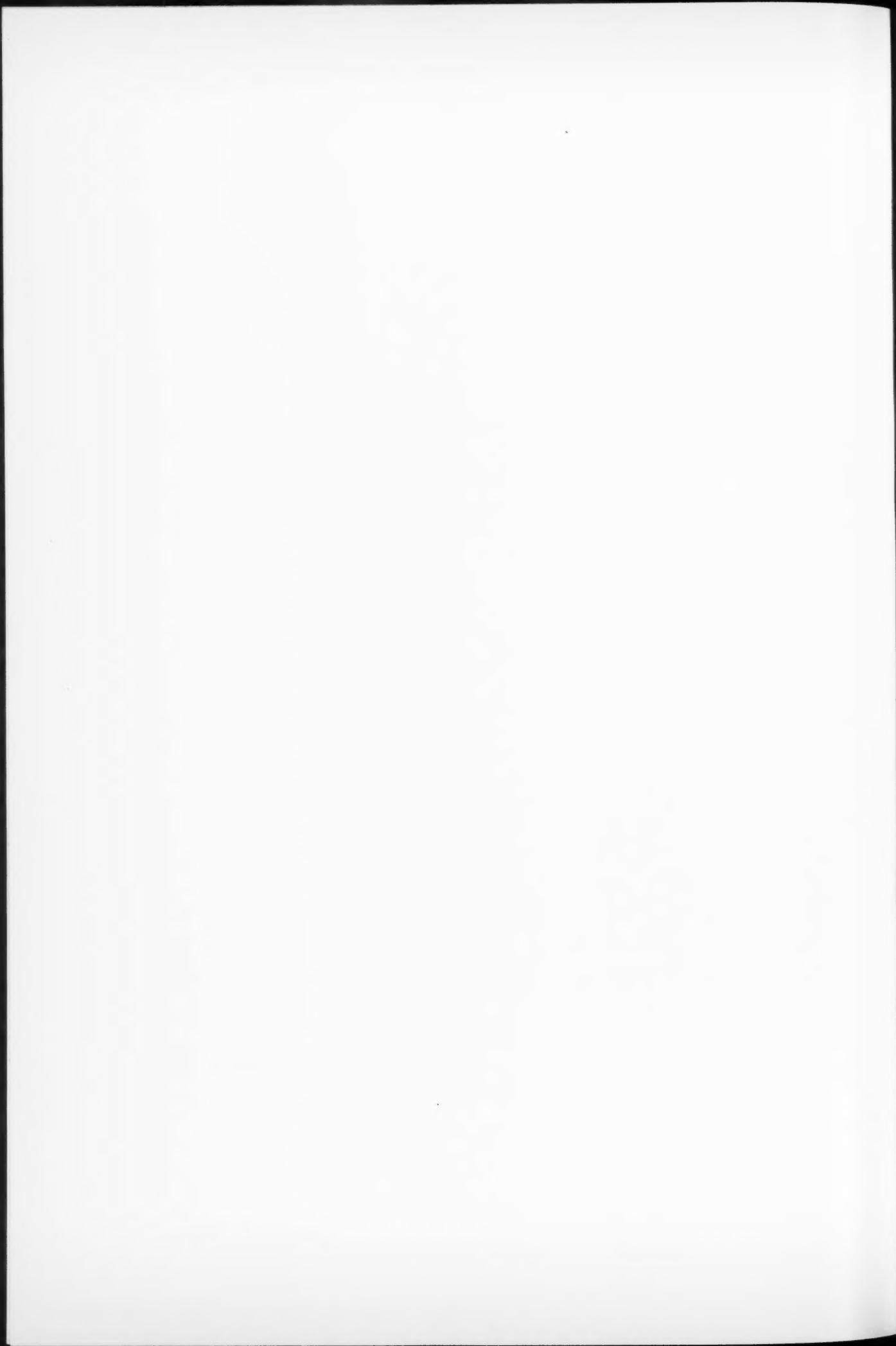


FIG. 4. RUSSIAN ICON BY NAZARIJ SAVIN
Ostrikhoe Museum, Moscow



JAMES EARL
A FORGOTTEN AMERICAN PORTRAIT PAINTER

BY FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN
Westport, Connecticut

There are a number of excellent portraits, all painted at the end of the eighteenth century in Charleston, South Carolina, which have been variously attributed to Ralph E., and Ralph Earl, his father, the New England portrait painter, who is not known ever to have been south of the city of New York. The character of two of these works—compositions picturing two women—is not at all in the manner of Ralph Earl, except for the window with a landscape vista, which appears in both. The dates of the canvases as determined by the evident ages of the sitters precludes the possibility of his son's having painted them. Ralph E. Earl was born in 1788 and would have been about ten or twelve years of age when the pictures were made. Their having been mistaken for Ralph Earl's work rests on no more specific evidence than a superficial resemblance as the product of a later pupil of Benjamin West and, in the case of the Paine canvas, family tradition.

Their actual painter, James Earl, the younger brother of Ralph, was born May 1, 1761 and went to England to study with Benjamin West in 1784, just previous to his elder brother's return to this country. He exhibited at the Royal Academy during his ten years' residence in London¹—though he was never a member of that body, as stated in the obituary printed at the time of his death. He married while abroad, but in 1794 when he revisited his native country, he left his wife and family in London. The vessel on which he took passage at this time was blown far off her course in a storm and finally made port at Charleston, where he eventually decided to stay and practice his profession. He received important commissions and it seems was just about to return to London to get his wife and family when he died, August 18, 1796, a victim of one of the periodic outbreaks of yellow fever which were common throughout the south at the time. His will, made two days before his death and proved eight days thereafter, reads: "In the name of God—Amen. I, James Earl of the city of London Limner, at present in the city of Charleston, do make this my last Will and Testament. First.

¹Register of St. Phillips Parish (Smith and Salley) page 356.

I direct all my lawful debts to be paid and satisfied. Item—I then give and bequeath all the rest, residue and remainder of my estate of what nature and kind soever to my dear wife Georgiana Caroline Earl now residing in London (at present at No. 54 Newman st) and I do hereby appoint my said dear wife Executrix and Elaxander Jones of the city of Charleston merchant, my executor, of this my will, and do hereby declare this to be my only will and Testament.”

“In witness where of I have here unto set my hand and seal in the city of Charleston, this sixteenth day of August 1796—James Earl (L.S.) Signed, sealed, published, pronounced and declared as the last Will and Testament of the Testator in the presence of Danuel Halloway—Nathaniel Jones—William Dabney—

Proved before Charles Lining, Esquire, C.C.T.D. August 26, 1796. At the same time qualified Exelander Jones Executor.”

The following obituary appeared in the *South Carolina State Gazette and Timothy and Mason Advertiser* two days subsequent to his death: “Died on Thursday, the 18th instant, Mr. James Earl, Portrait painter of Paxton, Massachusetts. This gentleman has resided nearly two years in this city, in which time he has exhibited so many happy specimens of his art as to enable us to speak with decision of his talents. To an uncommon facility in hitting off the likeness, may be added a peculiarity in his execution of drapery, and, which has ever been esteemed in his art the ne plus ultra, of giving life to the eye and expression to every feature. He was a Royal Academician in London, where his wife and children now are; and his name appeared equally prominent with the other American geniuses of the present time, Copley, West, Trumbull and Savage. As a man he must be regretted as possessing suavity of disposition, benevolence, and good humor. As a husband, father, we attempt not to reach his merits.”

Although my investigations have as yet resulted in the discovery of but seven canvases painted by James Earl in Charleston, it is probable I think that there are perhaps at least as many more in private possession in that vicinity. The obituary quoted though undertaking little in the way of criticism records specifically his ability in picturing drapery and of giving life to the eye and expression to the face. His handling of draperies is one of the chief ornaments of his compositions, as may be seen in the reproductions printed herewith. His capabilities however were of a more impressive character than that would imply. He was a more incisive painter of faces than his older and more famous brother and his draughtsmanship is of a more subtle and pleasing facility. His



JAMES EARL: ELIZABETH AND MARTHA PAINE

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, R. I.



JAMES EARL: ELIZA SHREWSBURY AND HER MOTHER

Property of Mr. Henry F. DuPont



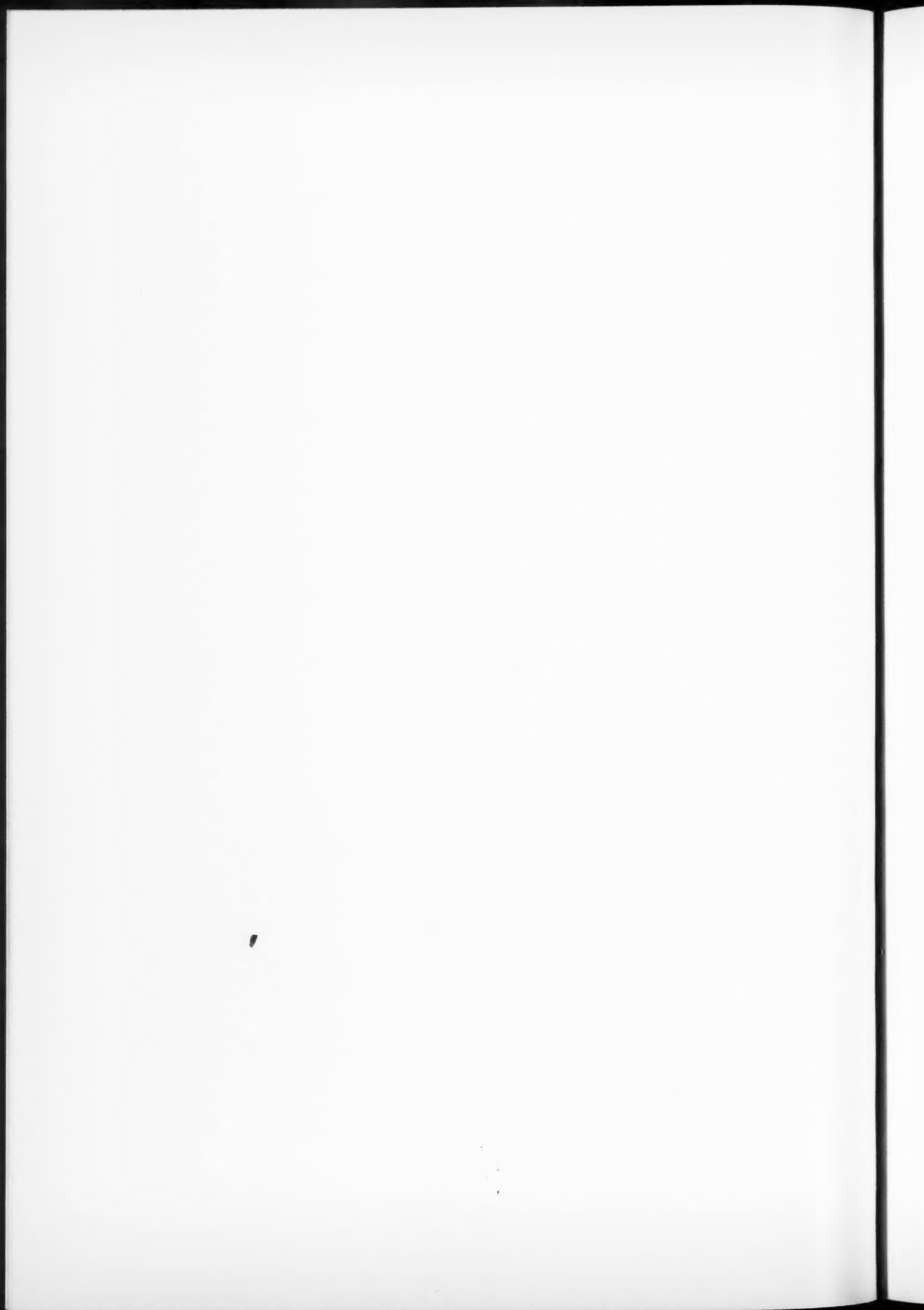


JAMES EARL: JOSHUA BELL

Property of Miss Eunice Chambers



JAMES EARL: DORINDA ENSLOW BELL



style tends toward the emphasis of personal beauty and very little that relates thereto escapes his attention. Ralph Earl's art is of a more primitive and vigorous type and satisfies itself in getting character in faces rather than charm. James Earl worked more truly within the great tradition of eighteenth century English portraiture and his entire product is closely related to that school. Ralph is the more individual artist of the two—and entirely as a consequence of his having invented in his youth, before he experienced the impact of English eighteenth century art and the academic influence of its great exponents, a formula, which he rarely if ever departed from. He continued after his return from England to paint the same type of picture that he had painted before his stay abroad—but with a very obvious difference and improvement in technic that translated his work from the inferiority of untutored limning to the dignity of real art.

The double portrait at the Rhode Island School of Design picturing Elizabeth and Martha Paine and attributed to Ralph Earl is in fact a fine example of the art of James. The "Bulletin" of that institution for October 1924, in an article on this picture, says, "Sarah (Martha) Paine lived in Charleston, S. C. with her husband, Capt. Thomas Paine, U.S.N. and the portrait was evidently painted when her niece was visiting her, between 1785-1790."² The dating is obviously incorrect for Elizabeth Paine, born 1776, is pictured as a young lady of at least twenty. The double portrait of Eliza Shrewsbury and her Mother painted in Charleston, is identical in size and similar in composition. Both canvases were probably finished in 1796. Ralph Earl in that year painted no less than twelve portraits—several of life-size standing—in Litchfield and New Milford, Connecticut, and it would have been well nigh impossible for him to have painted in 1796 either one or both of these canvases in Charleston. Having personally examined practically all of the portraits Ralph Earl painted after his return from England in 1785 or 1786, I am able to state definitely that more than nine tenths of them are both signed and dated. The Paine and Shrewsbury pictures are not and on this count alone the chance that Ralph Earl painted them is less than one in ten. Finally I must add that I have seen a copy of a communication from a descendant of Elizabeth Paine, which says, in part, that Elizabeth Paine was born in 1776, that her parents died when she was very young and that she was brought up by her aunt, Martha Paine, in Charleston; adding that she met Samuel W. Bridgman,

²Though investigation has revealed no record or reference to the residence of a Capt. Thomas Paine in Charleston during the 1790's that may be easily accounted for by the fact of his being a naval officer temporarily stationed there.

whom she married in 1798, when visiting relatives in Bristol, R. I. and that this double portrait was painted as a wedding gift by Ralph Earl, "so I have been told again and again. I am sure it was Ralph Earl—not James—but I can not prove it." Thus we are confronted once more with an incorrect attribution resting on the insecure basis of family tradition—and easy enough to explain as the natural result of New England descendants mistaking the Earl famous in that section of the country for the younger brother, probably altogether unknown to them, who actually painted the picture in the distant City of Charleston. Ralph Earl is not known ever to have painted a likeness in Rhode Island, though he was working in the vicinity of New London, not far distant, both before he went abroad and again in the early 1790's; nor is there any record of his ever having visited Charleston at any time. In 1798 he was in the city of New York.

James Earl was extraordinarily skilful in simulating that variation of expression in faces which implies a really masterful handling of modulation and gives a painted likeness something of the mobility of life. The eyes of his sitters he succeeded in imbuing with a semblance of the inner glow which illuminates the human countenance. On the other hand he seldom concerned himself with the structure of a head or the forms or contours of a face. In a sculptural sense his likenesses therefore have not the primitive significance of those of his elder brother, Ralph, or of their contemporary, Richard Jennys. His female portraits as a consequence of the peculiar skill noted and probably of his personal predilections as well are particularly good, for in them he found the opportunity of exercising to its limit his technical skill. More intriguing women than those in the Paine and Shrewsbury pictures one will hardly find in the art of the period, at least in this country. The Dorinda Bell as a bride of seventeen is an unforgettable image of the wonder accompanying the dawn of a new life in a young girl's face and eyes. Not, perhaps, beautiful, this young bride is certainly much more than merely good looking and the artist's likeness of her preserves for posterity a marvellously expressive face in which one realizes at once reside capabilities of expression as various as those which made of Eleanora Duse's one of the living wonders of her time.

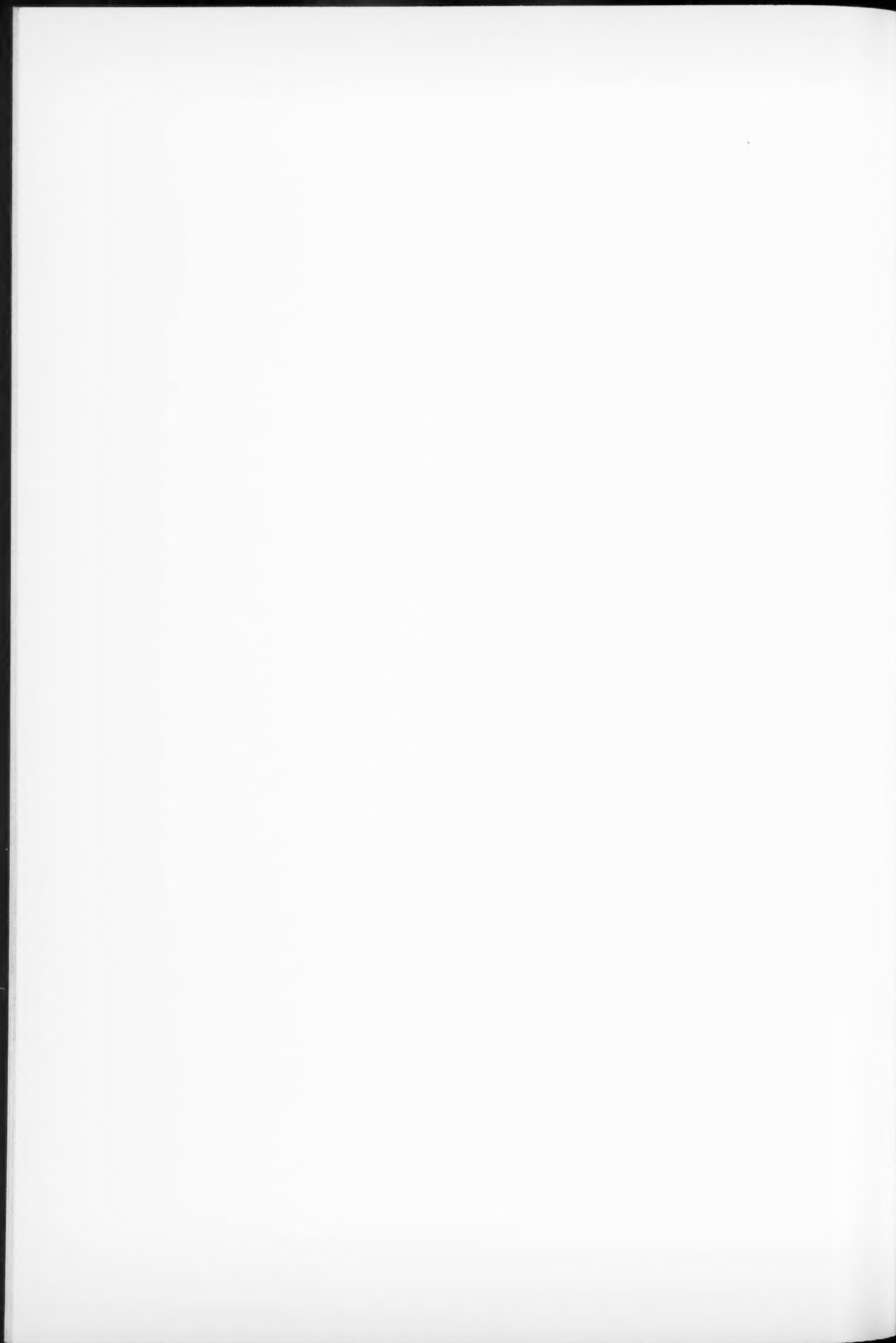
Examining the Josiah Bell and the Colonel Pinckney portraits one comes to the inevitable conclusion that his forte in portraiture is the simulation of life as it is recorded in facial expression. Few portrait painters, at least in this country, have equalled or even approached his ability to so paint a human countenance as to fix therein a sensible



JAMES EARL: REV. ROBERT SMITH
Property of Mr. William Mason Smith



JAMES EARL: COLONEL CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY
The Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum



suggestion of the transitional interplay of expression that reveals the inner self of a sitter. Such ability is I feel forever lacking unless born in an artist. It implies an altogether unusual, almost unique, gift of gauging and estimating with peculiar precision the fleeting indications of character which show but instantaneously in our faces. Thus the portraiture of James Earl, entirely apart from the perfection of his technic, has a very precious quality quite individual to himself. His having been so almost completely forgotten for a matter of nearly a century and a half makes it a privilege as well as a pleasure to recover and introduce his exquisite art to present day connoisseurs, critics and collectors, a generation to which it is entirely unknown.

PORTRAITS BY JAMES EARL

- 1 RIGHT REVEREND ROBERT SMITH, 1732-1801.³—Canvas. Approximately 30" H. 24¾" W. First Bishop of South Carolina. Painted 1795 or 1796.

—Property of Miss Alice R. Huger Smith, Charleston, S. C.

- 2 COLONEL CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY, 1746-1825.—Canvas. 35" H. 29" W. Member Constitutional Convention and Minister to France. Revolutionary officer.

—Property of the Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum.

- 3 EDWARD ROUTLEDGE, 1749-1800.³ Signer of the Declaration.

—Present ownership unknown.

- 4 ELIZABETH AND MARTHA PAINE.—Canvas 40" H. 50" W.

—Property of the Rhode Island School of Design.

- 5 ELIZA SHREWSBURY AND HER MOTHER.—Canvas. 40" H. 50" W.

—Property of Mr. Henry F. DuPont.

- 6 JOSIAH BELL, 1776-⁴—Canvas. 27¼" H. 23" W. Inscribed on the back, "This likeness taken in June 1796 AE 20."

—Property of Miss Eunice Chambers.

- 7 DORINDA ENSLOW BELL, 1779-⁴, Wife of Josiah Bell.—Canvas. 27" H. 23" W. Inscribed on the back, "This likeness taken in May 1796 AE 17."

—Property of Miss Eunice Chambers.

³Register of St. Phillips Parish (Smith and Salley) page 356.

⁴Josiah and Dorinda Bell probably lived in the immediate vicinity of Charleston, though not within the city itself, as they are not mentioned in the city records.

THE ANGUS NICKELSON FAMILY
PAINTED BY RALPH EARL

BY FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN
Westport, Connecticut

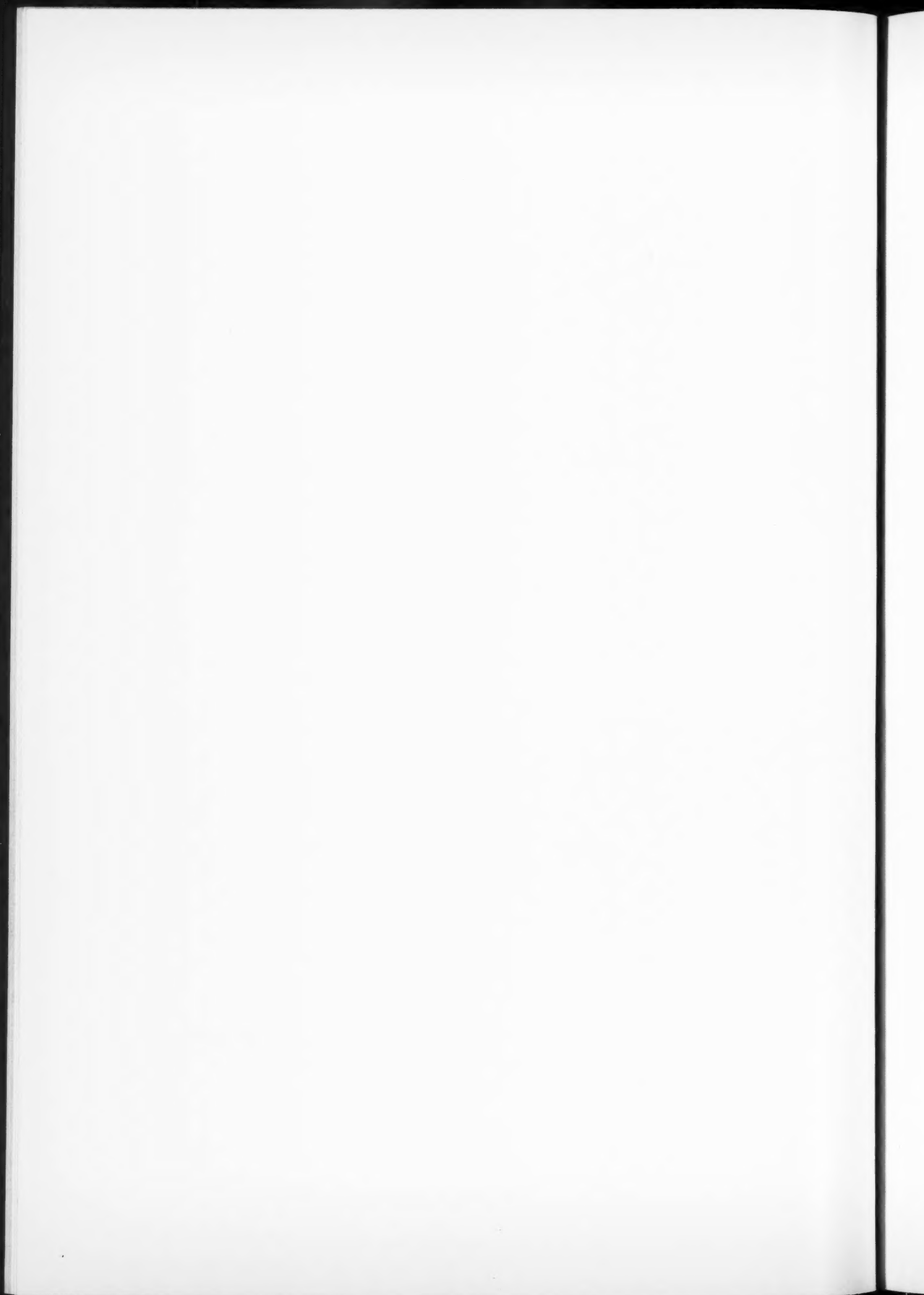
The eighteenth century picture of the Angus Nickelson family of New Milford, Connecticut, is unquestionably the most ambitious of Ralph Earl's works, and while it is neither the best artistically nor the most important historically it is in many ways the most interesting otherwise. The arrangement is well adapted to the oblong of the canvas and the lighting is well managed for the purpose of illuminating the figures. The blues, tans and greens together with the browns, reds and pinks of the costumes in combination present an effective color ensemble. It epitomizes the artist's abilities and inabilities as a portrait painter. Of the nine people included four only have any appearance of representing satisfactorily the persons they picture or are in any real sense actual portraits. Earl was singularly incapable in the painting of children and in all his canvases they have the look of marionettes or wooden dolls. Mr. Nickelson at the left of this group, his wife at the right and the two grown daughters, Anne and Barbara, seated on the sofa, are however definite likenesses. The portrayal of an eighteenth century interior justifies a description of the room in which the family is gathered. It is panelled, with olive green walls and has a floor covering in brownish red, green and brown, with a symmetrical pattern of rather large squares. At the right on the wall are two oval pictures in frames of narrow moulding; the sofa is upholstered in red and against the wall at the left are shelves of books in brown (probably calf) bindings and a small table with a green cloth cover edged with gold fringe. There is a tradition in the family among the descendants of Angus Nickelson that this canvas was painted after the death of Donald, the child at his mother's knee, and that that child was put in from memory. This tradition I think has some basis in fact though I can not agree with those descendants who date the canvas as early as 1791 or 2. The child, Donald, died September 26, 1791, and unless it was painted between that date and the end of the year it is not of that year. Samuel Malcolm, the boy in the red coat standing was born in 1781. He certainly appears all of fifteen here. Sarah standing next to him was



THE ANGUS NICKELSON FAMILY

BY RALPH EARL

Property of Descendants



born in 1777. Mary Ann, at the extreme left was born in 1784. I would say that she seems about twelve here. My conclusion is that the canvas was painted in 1796, at the height of Earl's career, when he painted eleven other portraits in New Milford. In 1791 it is possible that he painted one, that of the Rev. Truman Marsh, in that town though that might just as readily have been painted in Litchfield, which was Truman Marsh's home. In the intervening years until 1796 so far as we have any record he was never in the neighborhood of New Milford or Litchfield.

The dresses of Sarah and Anne, the former standing and the latter seated at her left, with skirts open in front and different colored underskirts; and the costume of the boy standing at his father's left, a long cutaway coat of bright red, long tan breeches and striped and figured waistcoat, are somewhat unusual for the period and therefore worthy of attention. Generally speaking Earl was an especially capable painter of costume and one is constantly intrigued by his picturing of hair ornaments, embroideries, shawls, laces and fichus. The imitation of various fabrics, satins, silks, linens, woolens, etc., and the handling of draperies he managed very well. Probably in the product of no other American artist can one study more successfully the costume of the time.

Angus Nickelson, a Scotchman, born April 27, 1735, on the Island of Isla in the Shire of Argyle, came to this country in 1762 and after living for about two years in the city of New York, settled in New Milford in November 1765. There he married, May 11, 1767, Sarah, daughter of Samuel and Anna Welch Platt. He soon became a prominent citizen of that town where he acquired considerable property and operated a mill and iron works in the Merryall district. He died in 1804 and his wife in 1820. His descendants have still in their possession an upright oblong silver plaque, sixteen by twelve inches,¹ engraved for Angus Nickelson with the family register by Richard Brunton the early engraver and notorious counterfeiter, as well as his family bible containing this register; and there still stands in New Milford a stone mark lettered, "To Mr. Nickelson Iron Woks 2 miles from N. Milford 85 miles from N. York 1788."

¹Reproduced in "An Early Connecticut Engraver and his Work", by Albert C. Bates. Illustrated. Octavo. Hartford (Conn.) 1906. Page 28.

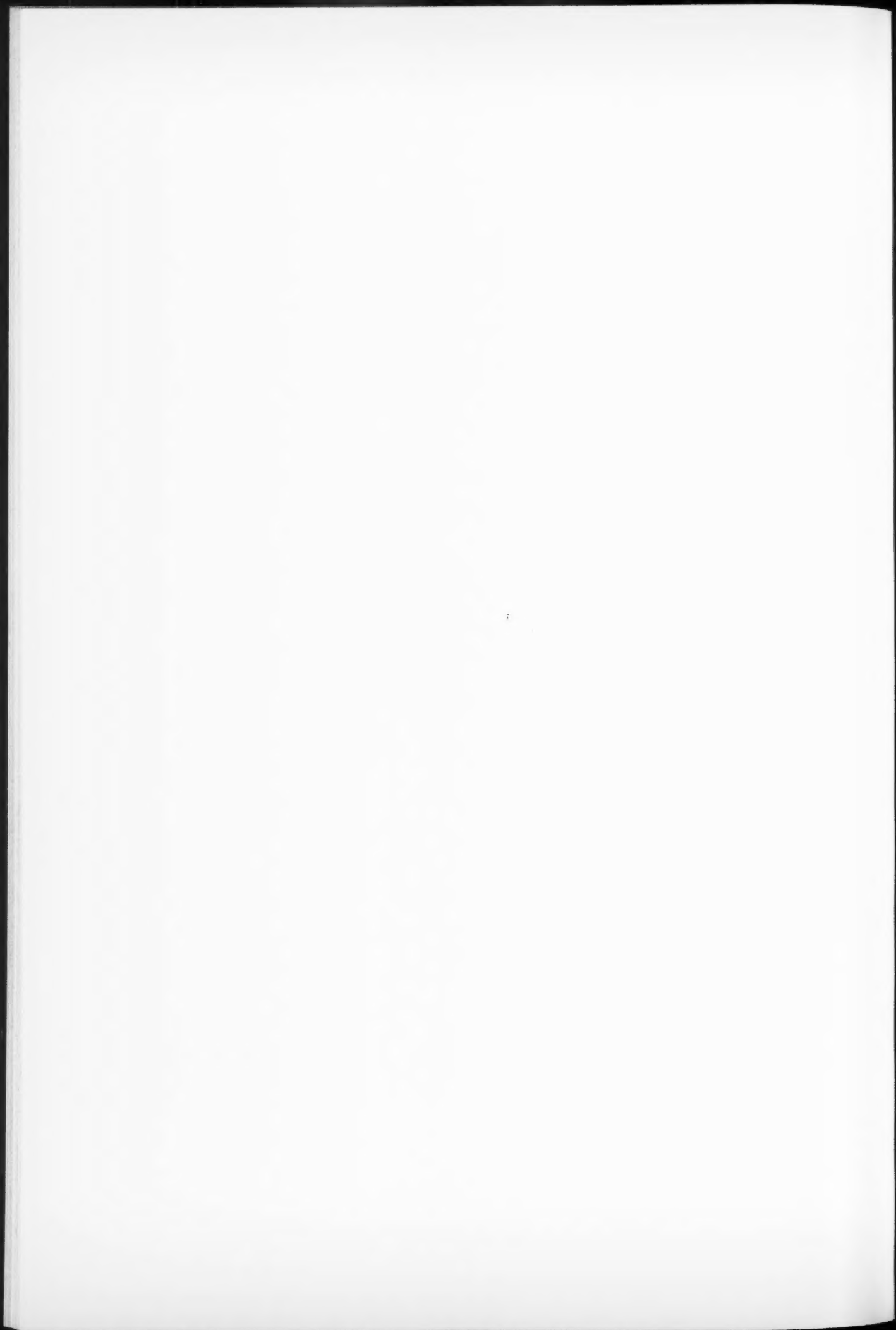
NATHANIEL ROGERS AND HIS MINIATURES

Nathaniel the son of John Y. Rogers of Bridgehampton, near Sag Harbor on Long Island, was born in 1788. As a boy he was placed with a ship's carpenter but when sixteen an accidental cut on his knee effectually terminated his apprenticeship and resulted eventually in his adopting portraiture as a profession, his first works being copies of two miniatures in the home of his physician, Dr. Samuel H. Rose. After attempting likenesses of several friends, on an early visit to Connecticut he first painted miniatures professionally. These works were executed on paper, cardboard and ivory and at very modest prices. After he had accumulated enough by his industry and frugality he proceeded to New York City where, in 1811, he associated himself with Joseph Wood from whom he received considerable instruction. However the same year he established himself independently as a miniaturist in that city. He married in 1825 Caroline Matilda, daughter of Capt. Samuel Denison of Sag Harbor, and they had five children. He was an assiduous worker in his profession and as a result of its exacting demands and the enforced confinement of such employment in 1825 was threatened with tuberculosis, which however he escaped by relaxation and exercise out-of-doors. For twenty or more years he worked in New York and the immediate vicinity and Dunlap in 1834 wrote "has long been of the first rank among American miniature painters." A member of the National Academy and a trustee of public schools he accumulated a modest fortune which enabled him to retire eventually from active practice. He died December 6, 1844, in the village where he was born.

The earliest miniatures from his hand which I have found are painted on paper and cardboard and are approximately the size of his ivories or perhaps a trifle smaller. They were executed in Connecticut during his first visit as a youth to that state and before going to New York where his technic improved greatly through his association with Joseph Wood — so much so that he became, if not the most successful, certainly one of the most successful miniaturists in that city, where he competed with the best practitioners of his time. These early examples representing a youthful Mr. Ferris and his younger sister, though slightly faded and rather loosely and broadly painted, already show the promise of his subsequent achievement in the exacting requirements of a difficult art. It is perfectly true that his faces are generally devoid of that variableness which results from fixing in them the expressions that



MISS A. M. S. FERRIS MASTER B. FERRIS
 UNIDENTIFIED YOUNG MAN
 UNIDENTIFIED YOUNG LADY SAMUEL DAUCHY
 MINIATURES BY NATHANIEL ROGERS



inform them with the light of humor, the shadow of grief, the repose of contentment and all the multitudinous indications of thought and feeling. However the individuality of each and every sitter is unmistakably portrayed by a painstaking fidelity in the drawing of heads and features and the modelling of the faces. It was presumably because of his success in picturing personality in this way without the further aid of attractive though unsubstantial and often elusive elements in portraiture that he won and held until he voluntarily retired from practice an enviable position in a city where his work held its own with the best. His color is clear and pure, and keyed to an exquisite medium of register that neither startles with an unnecessary exuberance nor ever becomes the least indecisive. His technic while not so minutely perfect as Malbone's, or so free and facile as Trott's, is nevertheless the equal of any but the greatest of our native workers on ivory. In the early miniatures on paper of the Ferris children the backgrounds of blue sky and reddish cloud are already worked in stipple, the faces being painted in a delicate wash. In his later ivories the stippling is so fine as to be indiscernible to the naked eye. The backgrounds are customarily worked in a neutral gray, green or blue tone. He was perhaps most proficient in his rendering of hair, whether masculine or feminine, wavy, curly or straight and his method of painting it in his ivories is easily studied in the early examples on paper. The flesh tones in his faces are particularly fine, the shading done in soft grays which from present appearances seem to have served better than the blues which many of his rivals employed. Most of the ivories are covered on the reverse with paper and set in plain gold locket with an inner beaded rim in front, a plain ring at the top and a small oval opening with inner beaded rim on the reverse for display of the sitter's hair.

A LIST OF MINIATURES BY NATHANIEL ROGERS

- 1 MASTER B. FERRIS. Oval on cardboard. $2 \frac{7}{8}$ by $2 \frac{5}{16}$ inches. Inscribed on reverse and signed, "Rogers."
- 2 MISS A. M. S. FERRIS. (Sister of B. Ferris). Oval on thin paper. $2 \frac{13}{16}$ by $2 \frac{1}{4}$ inches. Initialled, "A.M.S.F." and signed, "Rogers" on the reverse.
- 3 SAMUEL DAUCHY. (Circa 1838). Oval ivory. $2 \frac{3}{8}$ by $1 \frac{13}{16}$ inches. Unsigned.
- 4 UNIDENTIFIED YOUNG MAN. Oval ivory. $2 \frac{1}{4}$ by $1 \frac{7}{8}$ inches. Unsigned.

- 5 MRS. GABRIEL MANIGAULT. Rectangular ivory. $3 \frac{1}{4}$ by $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. Signed, "N. Rogers N Y." Property of Mr. Herbert L. Pratt.
- 6 UNIDENTIFIED GENTLEMAN. Oval ivory. Approximately $3 \frac{1}{4}$ by $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. Unsigned. *The Walters Art Gallery.*
- 7 EDWARD ARMSTRONG. Oval ivory. $2 \frac{13}{16}$ by $2 \frac{5}{16}$ inches. Unsigned. Property of Mrs. D. Maitland Armstrong.
- 8 MRS. JOHN HONE. Oval ivory. $2 \frac{15}{16}$ by $2 \frac{5}{16}$ inches. Unsigned. Property of Mr. A. C. Hone.
- 9 HUMPHRY HOWLAND. Oval ivory. $3 \frac{7}{8}$ by $2 \frac{1}{4}$ inches. Unsigned. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*
- 10 MARCUS WILBUR. Oval ivory. $2 \frac{5}{8}$ by $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. Unsigned. Property of Mr. Albert L. Webster.
- 11 UNIDENTIFIED YOUNG LADY. Oval ivory. $2 \frac{11}{16}$ by $2 \frac{3}{16}$ inches. Unsigned. Property of Mr. R. T. Haines Halsey.
- 12 CHARLES TYLER SAVAGE. *The Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum.*
- 13 MRS. CHARLES TYLER SAVAGE. *The Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum.*
- 14 UNIDENTIFIED GENTLEMAN. Oval ivory. Signed.
"Rogers". Formerly property of the Ehrich Galleries.

